

Top Carter Aide Pressed by Koch On South Bronx

Fearful of governmental and political repercussions from further delay in the South Bronx renewal plan, Mayor Koch and Deputy Mayor Herman Badillo met this week with a White House aide, Jack H. Watson, at a private, unannounced meeting, and asked him to push for action from the Federal bureaucracy.

"We have never gotten a sign-off on Charlotte Street," Mr. Koch said yesterday after word of the session had leaked out. "We want them to tell us whether, on the merits, Charlotte Street should go forward."

The 732-unit moderate-income housing project on the Charlotte Street site, where President Carter stood amid rubble in October 1977 and suggested a renewal, is the first step in what city officials hope will be a \$1.5 billion revival of the whole borough south of Fordham Road.

Mr. Watson, who is President Carter's urban aide, said later that he had promised that "the appropriate people at H.U.D. will get together with your people and get the outstanding issues resolved."

Substitute for Canceled Session

The private meeting at Mr. Badillo's Bronx home on Tuesday night substituted for a session — later canceled — that Mr. Watson had scheduled yesterday with a group of city officials.

But, as Mr. Koch and Mr. Badillo described it, there was little point in briefing people on the status of the South Bronx renewal until both of them had been assured that the plan was ready to move.

Since the City Planning Commission approved the housing project in what its chairman called "a leap of faith," there has been, according to Mr. Koch and Mr. Badillo, no reaction from the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development.

City officials also said there had been no reaction to the package the city prepared last April sketching a vast multi-million-dollar revival of the area.

Mr. Koch said he was worried that the Bronx plans might fall victim to the "Federal retrenchment."

Mr. Watson's comment on the point was not encouraging. "You should remember," he said, "that the President has announced that inflation is the No. 1 economic problem." Overall restraint in Federal spending, he said, would be reflected in the Bronx as well as everywhere else.